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Assistant Director for Operations

22 April 1955

Acting Chief, ☐ FOIAB3B1

Staff Study on Air Force Interference with Peking Monitoring.

25X1A6A 1. PROBLEM: To assess the necessity for action by the Air Force to relieve interference to monitoring of Peking NCHA at ☐ caused by voice transmissions of the Military Affiliated Radio System (MARS), Air Force component. FOIAB3B1

2. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

- (a) NCHA transmissions to North America on the frequency 7308 kc/s constitute, in effect, the Communist Chinese official channel of communication for direct dissemination of information and policy to the United States Government. Indirect communication through intermediate diplomatic channels is only resorted to when a formal exchange is necessary.
- (b) NCHA transmission is unfortunately not engineered for optimum reception in the U.S. even though specifically beamed here. In the spring and autumn monitoring is exceedingly difficult, sometimes fading out completely by the end of the transmission; the weak signal cannot be monitored if strong interference exists.
- (c) The Military Affiliated Radio System (formerly known as Military Amateur Radio System) is essentially an organization of amateur radio operators functioning under military direction and using military equipment for reserve training purposes and auxiliary communications potential.
- (d) An Air Force MARS net of 40 stations in the Midwest and Southwest operates daily with voice transmissions on the officially allocated frequency of 7305 kc/s, 5 kc/s above the authorized amateur band, and 3 kc/s below the Peking transmission.

3. DISCUSSION: MARS activities by the Air Force net on 7305 kc/s are currently causing the loss of up to three hours daily of English Morse coverage of NCHA Peking by ☐ at ☐. Potentially they may cause the loss of six or more hours (Peking uses the channel up to 15 hours per day--0900-2400 GMT). Judging from past experience Peking will

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probably not change transmission from the frequency 7308 kc/s until July; it will revert to 7308 kc/s in November and remain there for perhaps eight months of the following year. [] is backstopping NCNA coverage losses at [] through monitoring at [] however, the communications lag (average four hours) can prove serious in the case of vital information from Peking, and under any circumstances can routinely delay dissemination of this important file in Washington. MARS activity, while admittedly of ultimate value because of its emergency potential, need not be carried on for training purposes using a frequency outside the authorized amateur band if the best training experience is desired. At any rate, it would appear that it should be done on a frequency not detrimental to priority intelligence interests. The practical problem (as phrased by responsible Air Force authorities) is that currently 7305 kc/s appears to be the sole authorized daytime frequency for the subject network. OC advisers state, however, that this network may operate at any time within the authorized amateur band, and failure to do so at present seems to stem from a reluctance to incur normal amateur station interference.

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4. CONCLUSIONS: It is believed that in the current critical relationship with Communist China the intelligence value in speedy monitoring of NCNA at the [] is the overriding consideration. Although there may be a certain amount of time required for the Air Force to arrange a substitute out-of-band frequency for its MARS activity, there appears to be no good reason why it cannot order MARS activity diverted during local daylight hours into the official amateur band.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS: Since MARS Air Force indicates inability to offer the necessary relief without appropriate official sanction, it is recommended that action to effect the necessary relief be initiated by dispatch of the attached draft memorandum to the Directorate of Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.

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Enclosure (1)
Draft memo to USAF.

NFK:RGS/jmr

Distribution:

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